DONOVAN MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

26 December 1944

The Donovan Plan, embodied in JCS 1181, was passed to the JIC for study, comment and recommendation. In the JIC it became something of a football which was kicked about by way of a series of proposals and counter-proposals for nearly two months. By the end of December these had clarified into two differing proposals, respectively labelled JIC 239/1 and JIC 239/2.

The memorandum here included represents a brief interim report to the President by General Donovan just before he was to take off on one of his frequent field trips.

For the sake of brevity this memorandum has been inserted rather than the very extended minutes of the JIC which record the full discussions of the members.

26 December 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

As I am leaving today, I wanted to let you know of the present status of the memorandum proposing the establishment of a central intelligence service.

It was referred by the JCS to the JIC for comment and recommendation through the Joint Strategic Survey Committee.

The JIC Committee has produced two counter proposals: ... by representatives of the military agencies and the other by ... resentatives of State, FEA, and OSS. These two counter ro- ... ls differ from each other so fundamentally in approach, con- ...t, and scope as to be irreconcilable.

Both papers are to be presented to the Joint Strategic Survey Committee. The proposal of the civilian agencies closely follows the original proposal to you. It is based upon the premise that the end product of intelligence activity must be a complete synthesized estimate upon which policy with respect to the national security as a whole may be safely based.

While approving the appointment of the Director by the President, as suggested by me, the civilian paper would have the Director instead of reporting to the President, reporting to the

- 2 -

Board, consisting of the Secretaries of War, State, and Navy. The Board would set the policies but the Director would have the administrative power to carry them out.

The proposal of the military members is not yet finalized. As now drafted it evades early action. It is concerned primarily with national security in its narrow sense. Strictly military in its concept, it approaches the problem of providing national policy intelligence from the departmental point of view. It provides for a minimum of centralization and so undertakes to restrict the authority of the Director whom they wish appointed by the Cabinet Secretaries, acting jointly.

The effect of this paper would eliminate little of the existing confusion. At the request of the Strategic Survey Board I appeared before it and explained the theory underlying the primary paper and the manner of administration.

From the questions and comments of the members, I judge that they recognize the necessity of establishing such a system but once the Director is appointed by the President they ask that he report to the Board rather than to the President. The ground taken is the inadvisability of having so many individual agencies reporting directly to the President. I stated that this was a matter for Presidential decision.

Also they expressed the view that they would like to have

all three of the Chiefs of Staff as members of the Board. I offered no objections to this but insisted that, whatever the composition of the Board, the Director be free administratively to run his job, responsible as is a general manager to a Board of Directors. I talked also to State about this and they feel they must be consulted in the selection of the Director.

In discussing this matter with responsible officers in the intelligence field I have been surprised at their lack of understanding of the necessity for a sound intelligence organization, an organization comprising a central service in which career officers and civilian experts working together synthesize all available intelligence on the policy level, and estimate, before the event, political and military developments.

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William J. Donovan
Director

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